

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6495

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

CINCLANT

USCINCEUR

USLO SACLANT

USNMR SHAPE

S E C R E T THE HAGUE 4126

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, NATO, NL

SUBJECT: PROPOSED REDUCTION IN NETHERLANDS ARMED FORCES

REF: (A) USNATO 4356; (B) THE HAGUE 3427 (NOTAL)

1. WE HAVE BEEN AWARE OF AND HAVE REPORTED (REF B) STRONG INDICATIONS THAT CURRENT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS ARE FORCING HEAVY DEFICIT FINANCING AND GENERAL RETRENCHMENT OF GON BUDGET FOR CALENDAR 1975, AND WORSENING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS WILL PROBABLY HAVE EVEN GREATER IMPACT ON 1976 BUDGET. ALTHOUGH AN EFFORT WAS MADE TO ALLOCATE BUDGET CUTS IN EARLY JULY, GON DECIDED TO WAIT UNTIL AFTER SUMMER HOLIDAYS

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AND IS NOW STARTING A MAJOR BUDGET REVIEW AS BASIS FOR

ALLOCATING BUDGET CUTS AS WELL AS INCREASED EXPENDITURES TO STIMULATE ECONOMY AND ALLEVIATE UNEMPLOYMENT.

2. PLANS FOR DECOMMISSIONING ZEVEN PROVINCIE IN SEPTEMBER APPEARED IN PRESS SEVERAL WEEKS AGO. AS TO NEPTUNES, OUR LATEST INFORMATION (THE HAGUE 3704 NOTAL) WAS THAT GON HAD DECIDED TO DEFER ACQUISITION OF P3-C ORIONS, WITHOUT MENTION THAT NEPTUNES WERE SUPPOSED TO BE SCRAPPED.

3. IT MAY BE THAT BUWALDA LETTER IS MERELY A DEVICE TO TAKE OUT INSURANCE AND CREATE POSSIBILITY FOR DUTCH NATODEL TO FALL BACK TO EVENTUAL POSITION OF KEEPING NEPTUNES IN SERVICE UNTIL SUITABLE REPLACEMENTS CAN BE FOUND.

4. IN ANY EVENT WE WOULD WELCOME CONCERTED EFFORT TO GET ALLIES TO BRING HOME TO GON SERIOUSNESS OF CUTS WHICH WOULD SEVERELY REDUCE NATO SURVEILLANCE AND ASW CAPABILITY. SUCH EFFORTS WOULD PROBABLY BE ESSENTIAL TO STRENGTHEN HAND OF THOSE KEP LABOR MINISTERS, INCLUDING MINISTER OF DEFENSE VREDELING, WHO FEEL STRONGLY ABOUT NETHERLANDS OBLIGATIONS AS MEMBER OF ALLIANCE.

5. WE ARE LOOKING FURTHER INTO BACKGROUND OF BUWALDA LETTER AND WILL REPORT, WITH RECOMMENDATIONS, AS APPROPRIATE, ON BEST WAY TO MAKE CASE WITH DUTCH.
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